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Henry Hastings to W S Hall, 11 May 1859]

Woongong WA

May 11th 1859

My dearest brother

If you are in receipt of my last of Apl 14th it will in some measure have prepared you for the melancholy event it is now my painful duty to inform you of — our dear father expired in Perth on Wednesday the 20th of Apl at 20 minutes past 7 o'clock in the evening. He died without a struggle and we have every confidence that he found peace with God. A short time before his death at his own desire he was driven into Perth as he thought he would be able to procure there, more suitable diet than a farm can supply. Finding the Free-mason's Hotel not comfortable he removed to Ougden's Boarding House where he found everything much to his satisfaction. From this time he continued much in the same state outwardly. Many of his old friends called on him but did not think there was any immediate danger. During this, Frank was away at the Vasse, Anderton cattle hunting on the only pony at our disposal & myself on the farm with nothing but my legs to carry me about — on the 19th Apl our poor father sent a note to the farm for some herbs he was accustomed to make tea of, he concluded by saying he was no better. Ander arrived at home on the evening of the 20th fortunately bringing a second horse and putting them both in the stable — at 2 o'clock next morning I was awoke by a messenger from Perth who brought a letter informing of the death of our father. A & self lost no time in proceeding to Perth, where we made all necessary arrangements and our last surviving parent was interred in the Perth Cemetery on Good Friday. The followers were few but select, L Leake and Dyett being among the number. The Colonial Secretary and the Judge would have been present but did not know until too late. He was buried by his particular friend the very Rev^d Dean Pownall. After the funeral as I wished to be satisfied on some points I called on the Rev^d Saml Hardy & old Mr Powell both of whom were with him shortly before he died. They gave me many cheering particulars relative to his last hours and fully and unhesitatingly

concurred in stating that he died in the full assurance of pardon through the mediation of our Blessed Redeemer. Lazenby says 'he would sooner take Powell's word about such an event than any man he knows'. Mr Hardy said our father was constantly speaking in the strongest terms of praise for the unremitting attention he had received from Ougden. I think I told you in my last that our parent sent his cattle & horses to the southward shortly after my arrival — if he had had the consideration to leave one at my disposal for a time I do not think he would have been left without a child to close his eyes. He left a memorandum for a Will appointing Frank sole Executor and bequeathing him the Murray farm, all the horses — an equal share of cattle and household property — the remainder was to be equally divided between Shake and Ander except one or two trifles to me and any remaining things of our mother's to be divided amongst our sisters. I had a doubt about the validity of the Will and requested Frank to get Geo Leake's opinion who pronounced it not worth a farthing and everything at my disposal. I felt much hurt that you had been so little cared for as you had been for a length of time the mainstay of the family — and am thankful it will be in my power to make a fairer division. Mine is a difficult position I cannot expect to please all but I think I see my duty and I'll do it. Feel assured dear Shake you have one here who will look after your interest. I don't know what creditors will put in claims, but you know my assignment on the property with interest amounts to about £625 — our sisters who are or will be provided for by their husbands shall have our mother's trinkets &c and the property which will realize I think £1000 shall be divided amongst you three after the debts are paid. I propose selling every thing paying off the Govt debt & getting the title to the land. But this will be matter for future consideration. Ed Hester was here last week I would have borrowed money from him to enable you to come up, but he was disappointed in getting some heavy Bills discounted and had not the cash. But I hope by next Mail to be able to remit you £30 then you can come if disposed. As far as I can learn from both our brothers there never was a single word or hint thrown out connected with the matter I was requested to enquire about. Frank alone was joked [*sic*] and very little he cared. I had a long note intended to send last mail but had not stamps (connected with family affairs) but feel I have already digressed too much from the melancholy

event contained in the former part of this communication and must therefore beg you will not think lightly of me for enclosing it — it will explain many things you ought to know. I have written separately to Sarah and Aunt so you need not shew this but can explain anything to S— when you see her. I do not know how it originated, but a mistake occurred in my last relative to the quantity of corn — the average was not more than 9 or 10 bushels. We have killed sixteen pigs weighing I suppose from 90 lbs to 400 lbs. Of course I should not dispose of anything of value or interest belonging to the household department. I have spoken to Frank about Miss Earnshaw, Theodosia was much annoyed about the report, but I told F I considered he was old enough to decide for himself in such a matter and those who did not approve of the connexion could stand aloof. I'm morally certain F is not the boy to be thwarted by anyone, he has considerable obstinacy in his disposition. I could continue but must stop here. With kind love from all believe me to remain

Dear Shakespeare

Your loving brother

H H Hall